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The Twenty-One Blue Horses

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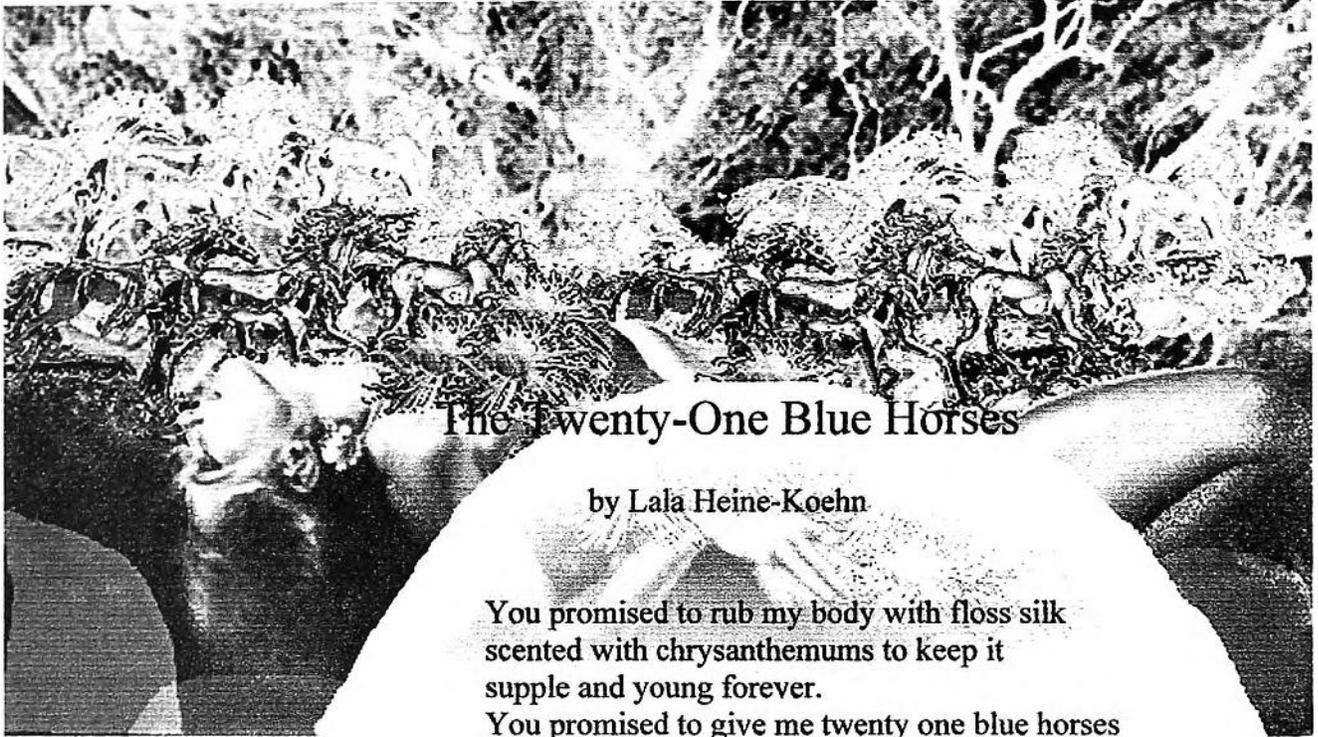
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The Twenty-One Blue Horses



The Twenty-One Blue Horses

by Lala Heine-Koehn

You promised to rub my body with floss silk
scented with chrysanthemums to keep it
supple and young forever.

You promised to give me twenty one blue horses
to take me wherever I want and no one,
not even they will dare to ask
where and for how long.

I will wear the cherry cloak you promised,
lined with the most exuberant red
that will billow around me like wings
of a moon-struck bird and we will fly, fly,
the horses and I.

I will paint with gossamer the inexplicable
landscape of the camphor tree that grows
a thousand branches, a branch for each
sad care that troubles those who love.

No one, not even I, will know
which branch belongs to whom and why.

When I see you waiting on the bridge
where the magpies' wings meet, I will ask you
to give me a bowl of gruel made of seven herbs
you picked to ward off spirits who devour
the body and soul. For you promised,
remember, to keep my body supple and young
and twenty one blue horses to take me
where no even they will dare to ask.